

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN

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INFO AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN

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AMEMBASSY PARAMARIBO

AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN

C O N F I D E N T I A L GEORGETOWN 1676

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, GY

SUBJECT: REPORTS OF GUYANESE MILITARY IN ANGOLA

SUMMARY: RUMORS OF THE PRESENCE OF GUYANESE SOLDIERS IN ANGOLA HAVE SURFACED DURING RECENT WEEKS. AFTER SEEKING TO VERIFY THESE REPORTS, WE BELIEVE THAT WHILE THE GUYANA DEFENSE FORCE APPEARS TO HAVE HAD THREE OBSERVERS IN ANGOLA, NO SOLDIERS WERE THERE. END SUMMARY.

1. AMONG THE MANY RUMORS FLOATING AROUND GEORGETOWN IS THAT GUYANESE DEFENSE FORCE (GDF) SOLDIERS ARE OR HAVE BEEN IN ANGOLA. ONE LOCAL SOURCE (A USIS DRIVER) HAS SAID THAT A FRIEND'S FAMILY RECENTLY SUFFERED THE LOSS OF A SON WHO WAS A CORPORAL IN THE GDF. REPORTEDLY THE CORPORAL HAD BEEN SENT TO CUBA LAST SPRING FOR SEVEN MONTHS TRAINING AND HAD NOT CORRESPONDED WITH HIS FAMILY. RECENTLY, THE GDF REPORTEDLY DELIVERED THE SOLDIER'S ASHES TO HIS FAMILY WITH THE EXPLANATION THAT THEIR SON WAS KILLED IN ANGOLA AND CREMATED IN CUBA. OUR BRITISH COLLEAGUES, HOWEVER, HAVE TOLD US THAT GDF SOURCES REPORTED THAT A GUYANESE CORPORAL DIED (FROM UNSPECIFIED CAUSES) IN CUBA. THEY REPORT NO INDICATIONS THAT GDF SOLDIERS WERE IN ANGOLA NOR HAVE WE BEEN ABLE TO COME UP WITH EVIDENCE TO SUSTAIN THE REPORT.

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2. A SECOND EMBASSY SOURCE, WHO IS AN EX-GDF OFFICER WHO MAINTAINS

GOOD RELATIONS WITH HIS FORMER GDF COLLEAGUES (BUT WHO IS NOT PLEASED WITH POLICIES OF GOG) INSISTS THAT THE ONLY GDF PERSONNEL IN ANGOLA WERE THREE OFFICERS, INCLUDING A PERSONAL FRIEND, WHO WENT THERE AS OBSERVERS. HIS FRIEND IS NOW BACK IN CUBA WHERE HE IS TRAINING TO TAKE COMMAND HERE OF AN ANTI-AIRCRAFT BATTERY WHICH THE GUYANESE PLAN TO OBTAIN (SEPTTEL FOLLOWS).

3. COMMENT: AT THIS TIME THE EMBASSY IS INCLINED TO BELIEVE THE REPORT THAT THREE GUYANESE MILITARY OBSERVERS DID IN FACT VISIT ANGOLA, BUT WE DOUBT THAT GUYANESE TROOPS FOUGHT IN ANGOLA. THE GOG'S CONSERVATIVE EAST INDIAN OPPOSITION HAS MOUNTED AN ACTIVE RUMOR CAMPAIGN, HOPING THEREBY TO AUGMENT FEAR AND CONFUSION AND PERHAPS EVENTUALLY AROUSE THE GUYANESE EAST INDIANS INTO ACTIVE OPPOSITION. FOR THIS REASON, ONE MUST RECEIVE THE NUMEROUS RUMORS CIRCULATING HERE WITH CAUTION.
BLACKEN

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